

Chapter 1 Contents

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The GDOT Design Policy Manual was created by committee with representatives from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the consultant community, and is intended to be a general reference of design policies required for the preparation of roadway construction plans for the GDOT.

The GDOT Design Policy Manual contains the primary design policy for the Georgia Department of Transportation. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) policies are the basis for the criteria provided in this Manual. This Manual supplements AASHTO policies and in some cases specifies more conservative criteria than AASHTO.

The GDOT Design Policy Manual was written primarily for the benefit of GDOT personnel as well as private consultants who provide professional services to GDOT. It may also benefit counties, cities, towns, or other local governmental agencies on issues related to the design of roadways within their respective jurisdictions. Every effort has been made to make this Manual as complete and error free as possible.

1.2. Organization

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), constructs, maintains and improves the state's roads and bridges; provides planning and financial support for other modes of transportation such as mass transit and airports; provides airport and air safety planning; and provides air travel to state departments. GDOT also provides administrative support to the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA). GDOT is supervised by the State Transportation Board and an appointed Transportation Commissioner. GDOT's Mission statement is:

The Georgia Department of Transportation provides a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to its citizens and environment.

The Georgia Department of Transportation Organization Chart can be found at:

www.dot.ga.gov/aboutGeorgiadot/Pages/default.aspx

The primary division that has an impact on the roadway design process is the Division of Preconstruction. The mission of this division is *to develop a quality set of right of way plans, construction plans, and bid documents, through a cooperative effort, that results in a project design and implementation that is the best transportation value for the taxpayers of Georgia.*

Offices under the Division of Preconstruction are:

- Office of Road Design
- Office of Right-of-Way
- Office of Environment/Location
- Office of Urban Design
- Office of Bridge Design

1.3. Guidance

The following definitions offer guidance for interpreting policy statements found in the GDOT Design Policy Manual:

May – The use of the word “may” indicates a permissive condition. Under this condition, the designer is encouraged to make a reasonable effort to follow the appropriate design criteria. In those instances where it is impractical to follow appropriate design criteria, the designer should use sound engineering judgment; no further GDOT authorization is required.

Shall/Will – The use of the words “shall” and “will” designates a mandatory condition and the designer must make every practical effort to follow the appropriate design criteria. In those instances where it is impractical to follow the appropriate design criteria, it will be necessary to request a Design Exception or Design Variance from the GDOT Chief Engineer.

Should – The use of the word “should” indicates an advisory condition. Under this condition, it is recommended, although not mandatory, that the designer follow the appropriate design criteria. In those instances where it is impractical to follow appropriate design criteria, the project manager shall receive approval from the appropriate Office Head. Acceptable documentation may be in the form of an email, letter to file, or meeting minutes. The project manager shall document the decision and approval in the Project Design Data Book. The criteria for the Project Design Data Book can be found in the GDOT Plan Development Process (PDP)¹.

1.4. Acknowledgements

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¹ GDOT. *Plan Development Process (PDP)*. 2004.

The current version of this document is available on the GDOT Repository for Online Access to Documentation and Standards (R-O-A-D-S) web page at:

<http://www.dot.ga.gov/doingbusiness/PoliciesManuals/roads/Pages/OtherResources.aspx>

1.5. Contact

To submit questions or comments specific to the GDOT Design Policy Manual and its contents, please send an e-mail to:

designmanual@dot.ga.gov

1.6. Manual Updates

The current GDOT Design Policy Manual is posted online at GDOT's website <http://www.dot.ga.gov/doingbusiness/PoliciesManuals/roads/Pages/DesignPolicies.aspx>

The GDOT Design Policy Manual will be periodically updated so that it appropriately reflects GDOT's current road design policies and requirements. An entire chapter or any portion of one or more chapters of the Manual may be re-written and replaced at any time. The version and latest revision date for each chapter are listed in the Manual Table of Contents, in the Table of Contents for each section, and at the bottom of each page in the printable/downloadable (.pdf) of the Manual. Revisions to this Manual are summarized in the Table of Contents. Implementation dates may be specified for certain revisions.

While subscribers to the Repository for Online Access to Documentation and Standards (R.O.A.D.S.) Design Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures Homepage will receive e-mail notices of updates to the Manual, it will remain the responsibility of each Manual user to ensure that his/her downloaded copy of the Manual is current.

Completed plans shall be in compliance with all procedures and documents listed in this Manual, unless a separate implementation deadline has been established.

1.7. Project Review and Submission Requirements

Project review and submission requirements shall be in accordance with the latest edition of the GDOT *Plan Development Process (PDP)*.

The GDOT *PDP* sets forth the current procedures and steps necessary for GDOT to administer Federal-Aid projects in accordance with the policies and objectives of Titles 23, 40, and 42 United States Code, and to administer State-Aid projects to fulfill the policies and objectives of Title 32, Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The GDOT *PDP* outlines the current process of project development from project identification through construction award.

All design criteria shall be documented in a Project Design Data Book, which is to be included with the project files. Procedures and criteria for the Project Design Data Book are provided in the GDOT *PDP* Chapter 6, Preliminary Design.

| GDOT DESIGN POLICY MANUAL REVISIONS CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION | | |
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| Chapter | 1. Introduction | |
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| | Submitted | Approved |
| Name | Brent A. Story, P.E. | Gerald M. Ross, P.E. |
| Title | State Road Design Engineer | Chief Engineer |
| Description of changes: 1 – Deleted List of Figures and Figure 1.1. 1.1 – Updated website links. 1.2 – Revised the Organization section. 1.3 – Office Heads are now permitted to approve any items that do not meet advisory design conditions. Documentation is required for the reasoning behind any decision that is prefaced by the word, "should". 1.4 – Updated website links. 1.5 – Updated email contact address. 1.6 – Updated website links and added first paragraph. | | |